

COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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LONDON, THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 1820.

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COBBETT'S FUND FOR REFORM.

“THESE ARE THE TIMES THAT TRY
“MEN'S SOULS! The sunshine patriot
“will, in this crisis, shrink from the ser-
“vice of his country; but *he that stands*
“*it NOW*, deserves the thanks of man
“and woman. Corruption, like hell, is
“not easily conquered: yet we have this
“consolation with us, that the harder
“the conflict, the more glorious the tri-
“umph. What we obtain too cheaply,
“we esteem too lightly: it is dearness
“only that gives every thing its value.
“Heaven knows how to set a proper
“price upon its goods; and it would be
“strange indeed, if so celestial an arti-
“cle as freedom should not be highly
“rated.” — PAINE'S CRISIS, No. II.

TO THE

REFORMERS OF ENGLAND,
SCOTLAND AND IRELAND.

Botley, December 31, 1819.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,

The struggle, in which we have so long been engaged, has now assumed a new aspect; and we must be prepared for new exertions; for, as to *yielding*, I am very sure that that has never, for one moment, entered into your hearts. If you look back into the history of our country, you will find that the struggles for freedom have generally been of long duration. The people have always met with reverses at the out-set; but they have always triumphed in the end. Victory is,

ninety-nine times out of a hundred, owing, much less to any other quality, to any other virtue, than that of *perseverance*. When defeat takes place, final and complete defeat, it is generally owing to a yielding at that very moment when a *little longer perseverance* and a *little more of exertion*, would have secured complete success.

I have at present to address you upon a subject of the greatest importance to us all. I shall, before I conclude, propose to you the raising of a Fund to be employed by me for the benefit of our cause, which is the most righteous that ever called forth the good wishes of mankind. It is the cause of freedom, of justice, of humanity: to maintain it is the duty of every father and mother towards their children, and of every son and daughter towards their parents.

I have just received an Address from the City of Bath. The gentlemen who sign that Address say: “with mingled emotions of surprise and esteem we have beheld you, Sir, with one arm resting on the lap of Columbia, and with the other reaching across the Atlantic, tear the mask from the monster, and strike that monster to the earth.” I beg the gentlemen who have sent me that

Address, first, to accept of my grateful thanks; and second, to be assured, that their entreaty to me to *persevere* was not necessary; for that it is my resolution to persevere in my endeavours to accomplish the restoration of the happiness and prosperity of the country as long as I have a hand or tongue to move. I am very proud to know that millions of my countrymen have set a high and, I trust, a just value upon those exertions which I made during my absence from England. The whole thing taken together is, indeed, a most striking instance of what industry and zeal united with talent are able to accomplish. Nothing could be so prudent, nothing shows so much devotion to the cause as my traversing the Atlantic, taking up my abode on the borders of the sea, and from that distance really and truly carrying on the war against Corruption by the means of a weekly publication printed in London. You must all know, that if I had chosen to become a citizen of the United States, of which my eldest son and eldest daughter are *natives*, having been born in Philadelphia a little more than twenty years ago; you must all know that the exertion of my talents upon that scene would have brought me wealth in abundance. But, so attached was I to your cause, that I never upon any occasion did any act or uttered any word other than those which became an English-

man, resolved never to abandon the cause of his country under any circumstances that could possibly arise. I employed my time there as I had done here, in endeavours to serve the cause of my suffering countrymen. If I could have been content with an easy and happy life amongst excellent neighbours and innumerable friends, "on the lap of Columbia" I should still have rested. But there I could not remain when the moment arrived that, as I thought, made it my duty to return amongst you. When I have been pressed by persons on this side of the Atlantic to return, I have always, until last Summer, answered, that it was my opinion that the struggle in England would not end without a CENSORSHIP on the Press; and, you have, doubtless, perceived that it was said, lately, in Parliament, that a Censorship was actually under contemplation before the Parliament met! A Censorship is this: that nothing at all can be published, unless it be *first read and approved of by officers appointed by Government!* This thing existed in France *before the Revolution*; but it does not exist there now. We are not *quite come to this yet*; but so fully was I persuaded that there would be a Censorship established whenever I should return to England, that I was resolved not to return until I had sent home all that I still thought wanting to make the people completely enlightened as to the cause

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of their miseries, and as to the remedies that ought to be applied. When I had done that, I came off; and, though there is not a Censorship to meet me, I will not answer for the absence of it for six months to come. Let us, therefore, be active while we can convey our thoughts to one another. Let us lose not a moment. If you do your part, I will do mine.

I like, exceedingly, the language of the Address from the City of Bath: I admire the spirit which it breathes: I approve of every word of it: but, my good friends, you will give me credit for necessary caution in declining to insert it here. By exposing ourselves to destruction we only gratify our enemies. This Address, however, shall see the light. I have already sent off a copy of it to my son at New York, there to be published and there it will be read with admiration; for every good man in the world feels an interest in our cause. I shall receive copies of it printed in America; and I will take care to forward one copy to each of the first ten gentlemen whose names are subscribed to the manuscript sent to me.

Acting upon the suggestion and still more upon the spirit of this Address, I am now about to propose to the Reformers of England, Scotland and Ireland to make an exertion of a new kind; an exertion which is called for by the present circumstances; an ex-

ertion worthy of virtuous men engaged in the cause of freedom; and an exertion which I am well satisfied would not fail to give to that cause a complete and glorious triumph.

But, before I come to a more particular description of the measure that I have to propose; of this new measure; of this new means of carrying on the struggle for the rights and liberties of our country: before I proceed to be more particular as to the mode of putting this measure into execution, suffer me to lay before you, in an abridged state, the new means by which the cause of Reform is now to be combated.

It is notorious that our country is plunged into the depth of misery: it is acknowledged within the walls of Parliament itself, that distress prevails every where. That it reaches from the Highlands of Scotland and from the north of Ireland to the Land's End in Cornwall. Misery stares us in the face, look which way we will. And, the Government itself stands aghast, acknowledging that it has no power to afford assistance, and that we must be left to *time*, which, as you well know, has, for the last five years, done nothing for us but carry us along from ruin to misery and from misery to starvation. In the midst of all this we have, in the most respectful and humble manner, submitted our case to the Parliament and to the Throne: we have prayed for a reduction of ex-

pences. We have prayed that a part, at least, of our burthens may cease; and we have prayed that we, who pay so large a portion of the taxes, and whose persons have been called forth to defend the country in time of war, may, according to the maxims of the Constitution, be permitted to share in the choosing of those who are to dispose of the fruits of our labour and to make laws affecting our lives. We have not proceeded in the way of violence; we have resorted neither to force nor to threats of force; we have maintained our rights by plain statements of fact and by fair and solid argument. And how have we been answered? The six Acts of Parliament, which have just been passed, contain the answer which we have received: and, to the intent, meaning and objects of those Acts, I now beg leave to call your undivided attention, for, it is necessary for you to see clearly all the circumstances with which we are now surrounded: all the perils in which we are placed, in order, that you may be able fairly to judge of the necessity of the new measure which I am about to propose.

The *first of these Acts* is called the *Training Act*. It sets out with asserting that men have assembled, in some parts of the Kingdom, clandestinely and *unlawfully*, to practice military training and exercise, to the great terror and alarm of his Majesty's peaceable and loyal subjects! And it

then enacts that every person who shall be a trainer in this way shall be transported for any term not exceeding seven years, or shall be imprisoned for a term not exceeding two years; and that every person who shall be drilled or trained or come for the purpose of being so drilled or trained, shall be punished by fine and imprisonment not exceeding two years. Any justice of the peace, constable or peace-officer, or any other person acting in their aid are empowered to disperse men assembled for training, and to arrest and detain any person present. And any justice of the peace may at once commit any person so arrested, unless such person can give sufficient bail for his appearance to take his trial at the next assizes or quarter sessions.—Upon this Act it is necessary to make no other remark than this; that is to say, that times are strangely altered since we were called upon, the whole mass of us, to make ourselves perfect in military exercise! It is said to be a prerogative of the King to call upon all his subjects to come forth in defence of the country; and, would they not be much more efficient if they were all previously taught military movements and evolutions! You can all remember when the school-boys all over the kingdom used to march about with flags and drums, and when little misses used to be got up to present little banners to them about the size of a

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pocket-handkerchief and tied on the top of little wands ! How strangely the times are altered ! Think a little upon the causes of this alteration ; look back a little to the time when poor silly country fellows used to be encouraged to strut about in rank and file ! Think of these things and I need say no more upon this Act.

The *Second Act* comes a little closer to us. It sets out by asserting that in many parts of this kingdom arms and weapons of various sorts have been collected and are kept for purposes dangerous to the public peace. It then goes on to authorize *any justice of the peace* upon information given him by any credible witness, that this witness believes that any pike, pike-head or spear is in the possession of any person or in any house or place, or that any dirk, dagger, pistol, gun, or other weapon is, for any purpose dangerous to the public peace in the possession of any one, or is in any house or place : in any one of these cases any justice of the peace may issue his warrant for the seizure of any such weapon. So that, you see, if any one go and swear that he believes that you have a gun, for instance, in your house, and that he believes that the gun is kept for purposes dangerous to the public peace, your house may be entered by force, by day or by night, and the gun taken away from you, unless you can come and prove to the satisfaction of such justice, that you do not keep the gun

for any purpose dangerous to the public peace. Now, I keep several guns in my house : how am I to prove to the satisfaction of any justice who chuses to believe that I wish to overturn the government, that I do not keep them for purposes dangerous to what he calls the public peace ? By a like process a pistol or any weapon carried about me for my own personal defence may be seized. Nay, I may be *laid hold of upon mere suspicion of having such weapon about me* ; and may have a fellow's hands rammed into my pockets ; into my bosom and about any part of my body to search for arms ; and mind, too, my very bedroom may be entered at night, and my wife and daughters may be tumbled out of their beds naked in order that this search for arms may take place. By another clause in this act, any person may be *arrested and detained* if found carrying arms in such manner and at such times as to afford just grounds of suspicion that the same are carried for purposes dangerous to the public peace ; and (mark it well !) the justice of the peace is to be the *sole judge* whether there be such just grounds or not ! And, upon this sole ground, without any other evidence whatsoever, the justice is empowered to *send such person at once to jail*, to be tried for a misdemeanor, unless such person shall give sufficient bail for his appearance to take his trial at the next assize or

quarter sessions!—This act is, at present, confined to the counties of Lancaster, Chester, the West Riding of York, Warwick, Stafford, Derby, Leicester, Nottingham, Cumberland, Westmorland, Northumberland, Durham, Renfrew and Lanark, and to the counties of the towns of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Nottingham, and of the City of Coventry. But, mind you, the Prince Regent may, by a Proclamation made with the consent of the Privy Council, extend the provisions of this Act to any and every other county, whenever representation shall be made to him of the necessity of so doing by the justices assembled at any general sessions of the peace, or by any general meeting of the Lieutenantcy of the county!—This, then, is the state of England! In such a case all commentary is useless. It is, indeed, worse than useless, because no words can do justice to our feelings. However, as we shall presently see, there is very little room left us for the *making use of words* any more than for the *making use of arms*! Our tongues and our pens are to be kept in as good order and in as nice a state of restraint as the use of our limbs.

This brings us to the *third Act*, the object of which appears to be to restrain the use of the *tongue* and of the *ears*. It commands that no meeting of any description of persons, exceeding the number of *fifty*, shall be held for the purpose or on the pre-

text of deliberating upon any public grievance or upon any matter or thing relating to any trade, manufacture, business, or profession, or upon any matter in Church or State; or of considering, proposing or agreeing to any petition, complaint, remonstrance, declaration, resolution or address upon the subject thereof! So, you see, we are to meet only in *fifties*! But, the *ancient right of meeting to petition and remonstrate is not to be done away!* Oh dear, no! By no means! There are still to be meetings of counties and of cities and of towns; but then you will observe, that these are to be called by the *Lords Lieutenant*; the *Sheriffs*, the *Mayors* and so forth; and if they *do not please* to call them, what then? Why, then, there are to be no such meetings! But there still may be parish meetings held upon the following conditions. Seven persons being house-holders within the parish, must give a notice in writing of the intention to hold a parish meeting, and of the time and place when and where and of the purpose for which the same shall propose to be holden. This notice is to be delivered personally to some justice of the peace residing in or near to such parish or township, six days before the meeting. But, even after all this is done, the justice may at his sole will and pleasure, alter both the time and the place, and fix on any other time

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being not more than four days from the day proposed in the notice, and on any other place within the parish. And, with his orders, in this respect, the people are implicitly to comply. When the meeting takes place, no person is to attend except inhabitants of the parish; and if any such person do attend and be convicted of such attendance, he is to be liable to be punished by fine and imprisonment *not exceeding twelve months*, at the discretion of the court. If the notice above spoken of shall express any thing which shall tend to excite or stir up the people to hatred or contempt of the person of his Majesty, his heirs or successors, or of the government and constitution of this realm as by law established, every such meeting shall be deemed and taken to be an unlawful assembly. If any justice require persons attending the meeting contrary to this Act to depart, upon proclamation to that effect, and if they do not depart within *a quarter of an hour*, they are to be deemed guilty of *felony* and to be liable to be transported for *seven years*.—Now you will see how careful we must be of the use of our tongues after we are met even with all these restrictions. Any justice of the peace who shall be present at the parish-meeting, may order to be taken into custody any one who shall proceed to propose or to propound or maintain any proposition for altering

any thing by law established, otherwise than by the authority of King, Lords, and Commons in Parliament assembled; or who shall make any proposition or hold any discourse to stir up the people to hatred or contempt of the person of his Majesty, his heirs or successors or *the Government and Constitution of this Realm as by Law established*.—Now, to propose to make an alteration which is by law established; to propose to make such an alteration by any authority other than that of the Legislature; or, wilfully and, advisedly to endeavour to stir up the people to a hatred of the King and his family. To do these things would be so manifestly impudent and indecent that no sensible man would attempt it; and no assembly would listen for a moment to any man who did attempt it. But, when we come to the words “*the Government and Constitution of this Realm as by law established*,” we come to words that a justice of the peace may give any latitude to that he pleases. What is meant by “*law established*?” The present six Acts, for instance, may be called part of the Government and Constitution of this Realm; and, if a meeting were to be called to petition for a repeal of these Acts is the man who proposes the petition to speak of them as most amiable and lovely things? Must he not descant upon the nature, tendency, and manifest object of them; and if

he justly describe all these, are there not justices to be found who will take him *slap into custody*? I need say no more upon the subject. You see what the thing is.—If the justice be obstructed in seizing such person, he may then proceed to use force; all those who do not depart and all those who aid or abet in the obstruction are to be liable to be transported for seven years; and, if any of the persons assembled shall happen to be killed or maimed or hurt by the magistrates, peace-officers or other persons assisting them, these are all to be *indemnified and protected against all prosecutions and suits whatsoever on account of such killing, maiming or hurting!* —Magistrates, peace-officers, or any persons assisting them *may go to such meetings armed*; but nobody else is to attend with arms or with weapons of any sort; and I dare say that a walking stick is a weapon. There are to be no flags or banners carried at such meetings; and any one who goes with arms or that carries a flag or a banner is liable to be fined and put in jail for two years. The justices in cases where the parishes are large, may divide them for the purposes of meeting, so that meetings shall not be too large! Thus we are, then, I think, *penned up pretty tightly*. “*Divide and govern*,” is the old maxim.—We have now seen what is to be done with us out of doors; the Act provides that it shall not extend to any meeting or assembly which shall be wholly holden in any room or apartment of any house or building. Well! this is

some comfort! We may meet within doors to the amount of more than fifty; and it is well known that we had a meeting at the Crown and Anchor the other day which consisted of a thousand or more than a thousand persons. So, then, we are *quite free* within doors, are we? No, thank you; for when we met at the Crown and Anchor we had to pay for the use of the room, and of course the persons entering had to *pay something*. They paid a shilling a piece in order to defray the expences of the room. This, to be sure, is the only way in which places within doors can be obtained to hold any considerable number of persons; and, therefore, this Act prohibits and puts down all such places; it forbids, under severe penalties, the taking of money for admission to such places, unless (and I beg you to mark the gracious exception!) such places BE LICENCED BY TWO OR MORE JUSTICES OF THE PEACE! Nay, any justice of the peace may at all times go and hear what is going on at a licenced place. And, any two of the justices, upon receiving evidence on oath that any thing of [a seditious, irreligious or immoral *tendency* is going on in such licenced place, they may at once take away the licence!—Thus you have a view: you have a pretty clear look at all the parts of this famous bridle for the tongue; and I will now proceed to what has been done with regard to the pen.

The *fourth Act* is for stamping publications: that is to say, *loading* them; and we know that loading

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things makes them travel slower. Our heroes of the present day seem to have a great dislike to light things that move about quickly. Mine was so light that it skimmed over the Atlantic like the dove, of the innocence of which it partook. Yet its innocence could not protect it. The present Act compels me to do one of these things: 1st, to publish it only once a month: 2nd, to make it contain two sheets and a quarter or more, of large paper, and to sell it for six-pence at least: 3d, to publish it with a four-penny stamp, or, 4th, to give it up altogether. Thus, you see, if it go forth once a week, as formerly, it must be stamped, and be at the price of seven-pence, or eight-pence, or something of that sort, or it must go without a stamp and be sold for sixpence and yet not go by the post.—This is not all that the new Act does. It compels me to enter, *before-hand*, into a bond of three hundred pounds, myself, with sureties to the same amount, in order to form a fund to pay any fine *that may in future* be imposed upon me by any judge before whom I may at any future time be convicted of what is called a blasphemous, seditious or even *malicious* libel! This is pretty well, even if it were to stop here. But then there comes this power: that the Magistrates may, any where, take up any of the venders (as I myself may be taken up), upon the charge of having published any such alledged libel, and at once, before conviction, before trial, bind him over not only to appear to answer to the charge, but also

what is called *to be of good behaviour during the continuance of such recognizance!* So that, if I, or any one of these venders were to commit any thing that might be called a breach of good behaviour before the trial came on, we might be sued upon a breach of recognizance, though we were acquitted of the libel, and *though no bill of indictment should be found against us!* We might be acquitted by a Jury on trial; a Grand Jury might refuse to find the Bill against us, and even *after* that, we might be sued for a breach of recognizances though we might have been bound over upon a charge wholly false! Therefore you will perceive, as the law now stands, every printer, publisher and author in this kingdom may now be legally held bound for his good behaviour during every day of his life without his ever having committed any offence at all against the laws, even as those laws now stand! To complain in such a case is beneath the dignity of man: he must hold his tongue: for there is no form of words that must not beggar the feelings of his heart.—As to the other provisions of this Act they are of no importance in comparison with what I have just mentioned. They impose shackles and restraints in abundance. They except books and papers containing only matters of what the Act calls devotion, piety or charity; but there is this singular clause in the Act. A clause which prevents any body from prosecuting offenders except the Attorney-General in England and Ire-

land and the King's Advocate in Scotland. So, you see, if these gentlemen do not chuse to prosecute any person, such person will, of course, go unpunished, though he may violate the Act every day of his life !

The *fifth Act* introduces a new punishment for what are called libellers ; and it authorises the seizing of libels already printed. It is called an Act for the more effectual prevention and punishment of blasphemous and seditious libels. When a man or woman has been convicted upon a charge like this, the Judge may make an order for going and seizing all the copies of the publication, which shall remain in any place and which shall still belong to the person convicted. The order is to authorize an entry by force into the house or building of such person, and to carry away the copies which are to abide the further order of the court ; and when the person convicted has received final judgment, the copies so seized are to be disposed of as the court shall order and direct ! As to the new punishment, any one who has been convicted a second time for a second offence is now to be, if the court think proper, BANISHED from the United Kingdom, and all other parts of his Majesty's dominions, for such term of years as the court shall order ! As the Bill stood at first, it was to be transportation instead of banishment. You must have observed that it was said in the House of Lords, by the Lord Chancellor, that he did not like the alteration, but that he would rather agree to it than lose the

Bill ! The Booksellers and their authors did not relish being sent to Botany Bay. They took fright and cried out most lustily. By this means the transportation part of the punishment was got rid of. For my part, I think the booksellers and their authors were in the right of it. Long Island, where a man can live free of taxes, pay half-a-crown a bushel for his salt, a shilling a bottle for port wine, get his chocolate for a shilling a pound in place of six shillings, and so forth, and where, for a thing to be a libel it must be a thing WHOLLY FALSE as well as malicious ; Long Island is, I say, a much pleasanter place than Botany Bay, though it does form a part of his Majesty's dominions ; and though we are told that the people of that country have Sunday Schools, Bible-Societies, and are extremely religious and moral. A heavenly place, no doubt, it is ; but still I think the booksellers were very wise in preferring Long Island before it.

Act the Sixth. Having, in the before-mentioned Acts, fitted us out pretty well with restraints, preventions, and punishments, it only remained to provide us with a speedy execution of the punishments ; and this is pretty effectually done in the Act which is called "an Act to prevent delay in the administration of Justice in cases of misdemeanor." As the law stood before this Act was passed, an accused party, that is to say, a person charged with libel might what is called in the jargon of the law, *impune* ; that is to say, put his trial off to a follow-

ing term. But now, it is not to be lawful for him to put it off to a following term, and he may be compelled to plead immediately; so that, the time which he formerly had for preparation; for putting his affairs in order, and for providing himself with the means of defence, is now most terribly abridged; and it appears to me that it is quite possible for a man to be *begun upon* and banished in the space of about forty or fifty days or less. For, observe, that, by the Act last mentioned, he is liable to be banished if, after being once convicted, he offend a second time. Now, suppose me to have already published two Registers. One may be sufficient, but I will suppose two. *I am begun upon* just before the time that I am to plead. I am found guilty in a few days afterwards, and *fined*, and not imprisoned. In a very few days after my conviction I am prosecuted for *selling* the other Register which was *first published before my conviction*; and then I may be *banished*! So that I have my back upon England, and the whole world before me in a trice! I do not know, and I do not want to know, enough of the *forms* of the courts, to say precisely how many days it would require; nor is it of much consequence whether it would take forty days, or fifty, or a hundred, to ensure my banishment. It is quite sufficient to know that every printer, every bookseller, every publisher, every writer for the press, is now liable to be banished, if he dare write, print or publish any thing which shall be regarded

by any Jury, whether common or special, as *tending* to bring into *hatred* or *contempt*, the *Government and Constitution of the United Kingdom as by law established, or EITHER HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT!* Mark this well, that every man who writes, prints or publishes any thing *tending*, or which a Jury shall *think to be tending*, to bring *EITHER HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT* into *CONTEMPT*, is liable **TO BE BANISHED FOR LIFE!** To mention, or to allude to the trafficking in seats which has been in the House of Commons itself declared to be as *notorious as the sun at noon day*; to say that this trafficking was justified in that house; to relate the late Speaker's words who said that our fore-fathers would have started with horror to hear that justification: to mention this or to allude to it, must not this necessarily tend, as long as that house remain unreformed, to bring it into contempt, if it be not in a state of the deepest contempt already. To give an account of the various corruptions which have, within this few years been brought to light: must not every such account have a similar tendency until the house take measures to produce a Reform? Nay, to petition the House for a Reform does of necessity imply that it is not what it ought to be; and does not this as necessarily *tend* to create a contempt of it until it be reformed? And, yet, are men to be banished for such mention, such allusion or such petitioning; and are we still to be told that we are *freemen!* Good God Almighty! * * * * *

But, I will refrain from speaking "even good words though it is pain and grief to me."

Such, then, my friends and fellow-countrymen, is the state to which we have, step by step, been reduced. Such is our situation at the end of the longest and most expensive war that nation ever knew; in which war the people of this country discovered greater loyalty and a greater willingness to make sacrifices of all sorts than ever were witnessed before in any country in the world; and as the reward for which sacrifices we were promised a thousand times over lasting prosperity, independence and freedom! Such is our reward; such is that indemnity for the past and security for the future which were to be the great prize of all our contributions, our toils and our blood. We were told that we were fighting to secure the liberties of England, Scotland and Ireland. Scarcely a man amongst us is there who cannot number either father, brother, son, relation or some beloved friend who lost his life in that war; and, this is the reward; this is the consolation, this is the fruit of that war. However, it is now too late to repine. To the stake we are bound; and if we cannot recover our liberties, it signifies not how soon we perish.

Despair, however, never yet did any good. There is still hope of legal remedy if we be but true to ourselves. We can yet find the means of communicating with one another. The difficulties of so doing have been made very great, but still they may be overcome; and I am for making use of all the elbow-room, which we have yet left us by the Acts. You will have observed that very little has been done to cramp the circulation of Daily news-papers, except in as far as the punishment of banishment has been added. I have well weighed all the dangers that have now been created; and I have made my mind up to the publication of a daily evening news-paper in London, to be called

COBBETT'S EVENING POST; and besides this, to publish, monthly, the Register, without a stamp, in the same form as usual and containing three or four sheets of paper. This will give us both celerity and durability: two things of great importance in a case like ours. And, I really do believe that the cause of Reform, which is, in fact, the cause of the King and the country: nay, which is the cause of the whole world, will, in the end, be found to have lost very little from this new and terrible warfare which has been waged against it. You will bear in mind, that the times are full of events; that the enemies of Reform are now beset with enormous difficulties; and that there will be scarcely a month pass without the taking place of something which will inevitably bring over hundreds of thousands to think with ourselves.

But we must neglect nothing that is within our power. If we will not give ourselves even a little trouble for the sake of ensuring success to our cause, we do not deserve success; and, most assuredly we shall not have it. I shall do whatever I am able with my own means; but, I now call upon you to put means into my hands in order to do things which, without such means, I should be unable to do.

I propose to you to raise a Fund for furthering the cause of Reform in a way such as my discretion shall point out. The sum which I think will be required will be five thousand pounds; this to be collected amongst you and lodged in my hands; to be used solely by me, of course, and without the check or controul of any-body; and without any one ever having a right to ask me what I am going to do with it. It is my firm conviction, that with this sum of money at my command I could do more, in the space of six months, for the benefit of the whole nation, than I shall be able to do without it in the whole course of my life. I will tell nobody how I intend to employ the money: I will answer no questions put to me upon that subject: people

will conjecture what they please: I will only say this, that I shall never employ it for any private purpose of my own; for the advancement of my own emolument in any shape whatever, and will be guided solely by my most anxious desire to promote the lasting happiness of the people and the security of the Constitution and of the Throne of this Kingdom. This is all I will say as to my motives in calling upon you for your aid; and the only thing that remains to be observed upon it is the mode of making the collection.

It requires only two-pence each from six hundred thousand men and women to raise the sum required; and, oh! what benefits would arise from those seemingly trifling two-pences! The money that is spent, by the labouring classes upon the mere foolish article of snuff in one single week and perhaps in one single day would more than make up this sum. Only think of the enormous sacrifices that I have made! And only think of the task which I am now offering to undertake. I have thought nothing and I still think nothing of either losses or perils; and I will not doubt that when thus called upon you will do your duty. It is useless to call upon others for exertions: to call upon others to do something; and to do *great things*, too, unless you will every man of you do some little trifling thing; and, what can well be more trifling than the abstaining from the use of part of a pint of beer in subscribing the amount to a Fund which you are convinced would be employed in the most judicious and effectual manner for the benefit of the cause. This is the way for you to act with effect. One meeting of five thousand pounds will do more than five thousand meetings of fifty thousand men each. This is the way, and this is the only way for you to contribute towards the success of the cause, with *safety to yourselves*, and, in the language of the above-mentioned famous Acts of Parliament without the *smallest danger to the pub-*

lic peace! I take it for granted, of course, that I possess your confidence: to blare out before-hand how I mean to employ the money would be to defeat the object altogether; and therefore I again repeat that I *must answer no questions put to me upon the subject, let them come from what quarter they will.*

I now come to the mode of making the collection, upon which subject, however, I must submit to your better judgment and greater experience; but I will just offer a few suggestions of my own.

I. In London and in other large towns persons who take a lead in *societies* or *lodges* or *clubs of trades*, may, I should think, very conveniently become the depositaries of a collection. Other persons may be chosen to receive money in the metropolis and in large towns. And, these receivers, on or before the sixth of February will be pleased to forward the amount to me at the place where my daily paper will be published in London, the letters always being post-paid, a regulation which I have been compelled to adopt in order to defend myself against the hostility which the sons and daughters of Corruption want to carry on against me by the means of sham letters.

II. Though I have mentioned the sum of two-pence, there are doubtless persons of ability who will be ready to subscribe larger sums: and I have reason to believe that there are some gentlemen who will be ready to do this in a very liberal manner indeed. Such persons may not wish to lodge their subscriptions with a third party; and they will, of course, communicate directly with myself; and I shall acknowledge the receipt of every sum so received by letter directed to the person received from.

III. Persons living in small towns or in villages may, without any display of a subscription, make up a pound or two, which can be forwarded as before-mentioned.

IV. I have thought that it might be

useful in populous places for those who receive subscriptions to open books in order that such subscribers as chose to do it might write their names in them; for, I trust in God that the time is not very distant when a man will be proud to know that his name is recorded in such a book. When the subscription is closed I should like to have the books sent up to me; I should do myself the honour of writing my name at the bottom, and send them back to be kept amongst those who have distinguished themselves upon such a memorable occasion. Our cause is a most honourable and glorious one; and if we are ashamed of it we are men (if such we can be called) that deserve neither liberty nor happiness.

Lastly, I wish every such book and every subscription paper to be entitled, "COBBETT'S FUND FOR REFORM," and, as the sooner we begin a good work the sooner we shall end it, let me request you to lose as little time as possible. I wish to have these means in my hands by the third week in February at latest.

I need scarcely add, that, in every case I, and every one belonging to me will do every thing that lies in our power for the success of this cause. The cause has gained ground in place of losing ground even within the last two months, in spite of all that our enemies have been able to do. The spirit of the people, so far from being subdued, is higher than it ever was. Liberty is too great a favorite of heaven to be deserted and left to perish, especially in England, which was its cradle, and which, let us vow to God, shall not be its grave!

God bless and preserve you all,
Wm. COBBETT.

TO MR. JAMES PAUL COBBETT,
NEW YORK.

Botley, 1st Jan. 1820.

MY DEAR JAMES,

I set off for London to-morrow, there to wage, foot to foot, a deadly war against Corruption. The bag

shall feel, before she hears the cuckoo again, that I have not crossed the Atlantic for nothing. You will see that I have been driven into a daily newspaper; and, I trust, that that paper will drive Corruption half out of her wits. She has been at her old tricks, as you will see by the falsehoods and heaps of trash which have just come out under the auspices of that prime tool of baseness, the fellow that used to live in Pantou-square, who seems to be the focus of the whole set, from the lofty bands of proud peculators down to the little dirty and envious tribe in Westminster, who have at their head, as an example to the betrayers of private correspondence and private confidence, a man who is now at the head of nothing but the very dregs of that great and public-spirited city of which he was once the idol! I have shaken from me at once all the crowd, that used to hang upon my skirts, hamper me by their intrigues, and vex me by their selfishness and their folly. In exchange for all this rubbish, *I have your brothers*; and, my dear little James, we are a host more than a match for all the enemies that will dare to take the field against us. I now know that I have associates whom neither gold nor blandishments can seduce; and who will not act the part of those who stab in the back every one whose talents pushes him on before them. If the Parliament could find out some means of "disarming" reptiles like these, they would render a real benefit to mankind.

We have found out a most excellent substitute for coffee and tea. You will see a full account of it in my last Register, in a letter addressed to the female Reformers, who are the only women in England that appear to have either sense or spirit. In speaking of English women we must never forget the meritorious conduct of that famous young lady in Cornwall, Miss TOWER, whose noble defence of herself at the assizes at Bodmin will immortalize her name. The use of this substitute for tea and coffee is

gaining great ground; and in London, where it is difficult for families to come at the wheat very handily, Mr. HUNT is, I understand, *about to open a grand house* for the sale of the substitute for tea and coffee. This is a sort of commerce which we must all wish to see thrive. Amongst other good things attending it will be the expending of our money upon the fruits of our own soil in place of giving it to the negro-drivers, who are always, without a single exception, on the side of every thing that is corrupt and tyrannical.

Give my kind respects to Mr. Spooner, and ask him whether he does not think that my prophecies *are now coming to pass*. Be sure to send me his paper, and tell him to read attentively about what is passing here, and to give his readers a little account of it from time to time. Send my kind respects to Mr. Duane, also, and beg him to have the goodness to forward his paper to you to be sent to me; for if I get that regularly I shall know every thing that is doing, and that is to be done, at Washington. Beg him to write to me, also, when he can. His great knowledge, as well as his great talents, and especially his great public spirit and real, sincere love of his country, render him an object of respect with every man who has the honour to know him. A letter from him now and then would be of great use to me. I will send you my daily paper for his and Mr. Spooner's use: and thus our countries will be mutually beneficial to each other. Merchant ships will be good for *something*, at any rate.

Lay out a York six-pence for a halter, send it to old BINNS, and tell him that it is a present from the relations of *Father O'Coigley*! By the next packet I will send you a caricature that they have published here, representing me as flying over the sea and old ISAAC WRIGHT dancing with the Devil upon the American shore, rejoicing at my departure!

You will see in one of the newspapers a report of a debate, in which Mr. Brougham reproached Lord Castlereagh with the sending of such a fellow as *Manners* to Boston as Consul. Lord Castlereagh answered that, until after the man had got his appointment, he was not made acquainted with his character! Though this apology is but a lame one, it is better than none, and for the honour of the country, I am glad it has been made public.

I will endeavour to find out what *your pretty gentleman*, at New York, was before he left Ireland. I will not forget him, you may be assured. In some shape or other his conduct shall be before the public before the middle of March.

God bless you.

WM. COBBETT.

P. S. You see what lies they are telling here about the *starvation in America*! I wish to God the Americans could be starved into *two meals of meat a day*; and be made to leave off a little of their wine and their spirits. I have often thought (God forgive me!) that it would be a good thing for them to have our tax-gatherers amongst them for a year or two, to reduce them down to something like reasonable eating and drinking. The next Registers that you will get, after two more, will be monthly ones, which you will sell at a quarter of a dollar a piece. They will let the people of America see clearly into the state of all John Bull's affairs; and oh! how they will make them *repent of their rebellion*.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

COBBETT'S DAILY EVENING POST, the first Number of which will be published on *Monday the 24th of January*, will be of the same size and at the same price as other daily evening papers. It will have that mark of

“respectability,” called a stamp, for which four-pence will be paid by me even before the print be put upon the paper. The Paper will be sold to news-men in the usual way for *six-pence*, and they will, as I am told is the custom, sell it to their customers for *seven-pence*. Those who publish newspapers in London, do not sell them in retail, further than from *their counter*. Those gentlemen, therefore, who may wish to take this paper will be pleased to apply to their *news-men* in London, unless, indeed, to the agents of those news-men in the country. For the further information of our friends, the Reformers, in the country, it may be necessary to observe, that, by forming themselves into little *reading partnerships* of twenty and thirty, and by getting one of the number to write to a news-man in London, sending him the money before-hand for a quarter of a year or any other period, they will be sure to have the paper regularly *by post*. Nothing will be more easy or more agreeable than to meet in little companies and read all the news: all about the state of France and America; all the debates in Parliament; all my commentaries upon the “*wild and visionary projects*” of all the innumerable political quacks that are now coming forth with their nostrums. The news-men are a numerous body, and are, in general, very punctual in their attention to their business. I have endeavoured to get a complete list of them. I have not been able to do this, but I will insert it in the *next Register*; which will be published on Saturday, the 15th instant. I invite the gentlemen in that trade to send me *their names and addresses before the 12th instant*. I shall be sorry to omit any name; but, if I have not the names, I cannot insert them.

As to the Register, there will be one on Saturday, the fifteenth instant, and also on Saturday, the 22nd instant. I mean to make the last of these two contain the Plan which we agreed I should draw up, at the Crown and Anchor, for the **PROMOTION OF SOBRIETY, FRUGALITY, AND AN ABSTINENCE OF GAMING**. These will each contain *two sheets* and *a quarter*, and must be sold for six-pence each, in order to keep without the reach of the new Acts. Then the **EVENING POST** comes on on Monday, the 24th instant; so that I shall have kept up the fire, in one way or another, without slackening. Then, on the 1st of March, comes the first *monthly Register*; and after that, a Register on the first day of every month. It will contain about four sheets of paper, and will go on growing into volumes as long as it shall please God to give me health, and the Parliament to give me leave to write.

And now, “**TWO-PENNY TRASH**;” dear little two-penny trash, go thy ways! Thou hast acted thy part in this grand drama. Ten thousand wagon loads of the volumes, that fill the libraries and bookseller’s shops, have never caused a thousandth part of the thinking, nor a millionth part of the stir, that thou hast caused. Thou hast frightened more and greater villains than ever were frightened by the jail and the gibbet. And thou hast created more pleasure and more hope, in the breasts of honest men, than ever were before created by tongue or pen, since England was England. When thy stupid, corrupt, malignant, and cowardly enemies shall be rotten and forgotten, thou wilt live, be beloved, admired and renowned.

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